United Nations A/HRC/39/NGO/97

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 August 2018

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-ninth session
10-28 September 2018
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 August 2018]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

GE.18-14424(E)
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Enforced disappearances in Pakistan's Balochistan Province

The decades-old conflict between Baloch nationalists and the Islamabad government went violent when the military assumed power in Pakistan in 1999 under General Parvez Musharraf's command. Baloch nationalists blame the Government of Pakistan and the military for denying the indigenous people of the right to development and their due share in natural resources extracted from Pakistan's Balochistan Province like natural gas, gold etc.

The Pakistan military has adopted a brutal counter-insurgency strategy since 2004 to curb the Baloch insurgency. Thousands of people in Balochistan Province, from various walks of life, have been enforced disappeared. Hundreds of them turned dead with bullet-riddled and tortured bodies.

Society for Threatened Peoples has received details of 543 cases of enforced disappearances from January to July 2018. Most of the reported cases belong to four out of 32 districts of Balochistan. In majority of cases, the victims were picked up by security forces from their homes, in front of their families and villagers. Normally, the security forces come and siege the village for hours, search the houses, take all men along with their valuables, and leave. In some cases, the military has burnt selected houses or the entire village, especially in Awaran district of Balochistan.

Families of disappeared persons:

The case of Safar, forcibly disappeared by the military in 2013, came into light when his wife, Ganjal died on 2 June 2018. Safar, 24, was abducted by security forces from his house in Hub town of district Lasbela on 24 October 2013, in front of the entire family, after six months into their marriage. Miss Ganjal tried to resist the army personnel, but they shove her away with the butt of their gun. The couple were residents of Labaach, Awaran of Balochistan. Their families left the village and shifted to Hub town, as there were continuous military operations in the area.

Miss Ganjal knocked every door to get news of her husband. She gradually became a patient of anxiety and hypertension out of sheer helplessness.

The doctors knew her mental condition but could not find a cure. She suffered from an illness nearly all relatives of enforced disappeared persons suffer. Ganjal had her last anxiety attack on 2 June 2018.

The victims of enforced disappearance include Abdul Hai, the son of Mr. Jumma Khan Kurd. He was whisked away by the security forces from the town of Mach on 21st May. He had been sitting in Koh-Baash restaurant when two Vigo pick-ups with more than 20 army personnel accompanied by personnel of intelligence agencies encircled the restaurant and took away Abdul Hai.

Abdul Hai was blindfolded and handcuffed before being escorted to one of the waiting pick-ups. Aged 35, he was a farmer and was the only supporting member of an extended family devastated by a number of enforced disappearances. His brother Ali Sher Kurd had been abducted by the same forces and was found dead in 2010.

Local Justice System

Miss Zahra Mehrab went to Turbat Police Station to lodge the FIR (First Information Report) against the forcible disappearance of her uncle, Noor Ahmad.

Noor Ahmed was teacher and resident of Phulabad, Tump, district Kech. He was the uncle of Karima Baloch, the chairperson of Baloch Students Organization.

Noor Ahmed was abducted by the security forces on 26 July 2016 while he was traveling back to his home from Turbat. The other passengers in the van witnessed his abduction when the van was stopped at Ginah Frontier Corps check post and all the passengers' ID cards were checked. After confirming the identity of Noor Ahmed, he was blindfolded and offloaded from the vehicle.

Turbat police refused to lodge the FIR against the security forces, saying they would register the case only if Zahra said her uncle had been abducted by unknown gunmen, not the FC, the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force responsible for the enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan.

She then approached the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's coordinator for Turbat task force, Professor Ghani Parwaz, who accompanied her to the police station. "Police further terrorized the family by saying 'if you launch a case against FC, it would put yourself and the rest of your family at risk. You know FC won't listen to anyone. They will release him when they want'", said Parwaz when we called him for an update on the case.

Zahra then traveled more than 700 Kilometers to Quetta and submitted an application in the Balochistan High Court. The remedies and the judicial system did not work and the tortured body of Noor Ahmed was found dumped in Meerabad, Tump, district Kech on 2 January, 2018.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the U.N. Human Rights Council to urge the Government of Pakistan:

- to stop arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan Province,
- to ensure the protection for the civilian population and the respect of their basic human rights,
- to provide information on the whereabouts of those persons who disappeared,
- to end impunity for arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in the Balochistan Province.